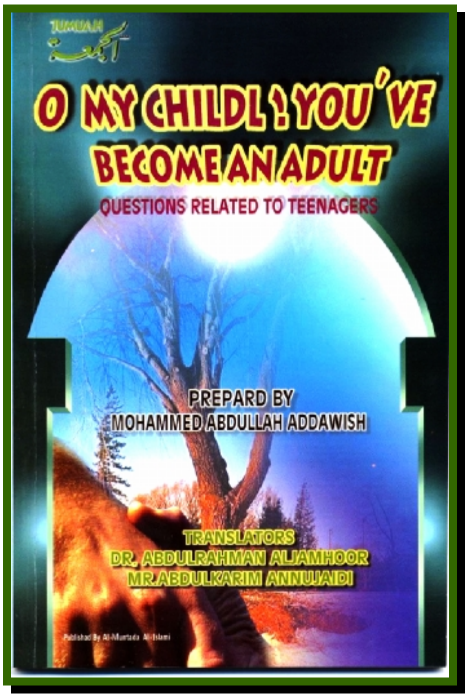
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All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, may Allaah exalt his mention as well as that of his family and all his companions.

This material has been reviewed and forwarded for publishing and distribution by the English language department of IslamWeb.

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O My Child! You've Become an Adult

Question and Answer Related to Teenagers

By

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Publisher's Note

Islam is the religion chosen by Allah to save mankind from the deadly Satanic tricks. It is the divine candle bestowed by Him upon people to guide them among the stumbles of life. Thereby It purifies their souls allowing them to comprehend the fact that they have been created for one sacred duty: to worship Allah

Understanding that millions of Muslims are deprived of getting Islamic knowledge available in Arabic because they are non-Arabs, a center of translation became a pressing need. Being blessed with Allah's help, we could achieve such a sublime goal. And we hope that our effort results in contributing to the Islamic propagation

The goal of the center of translation is to make use of translation as a means of d'awa. Our task is to provide non-Arab Muslims, as well as truth seekers, with Islamic materials of a high level of authenticity. Thus, they may get a better understanding of Islam. May Allah help us accomplish our duty successfully

Abdulrahman Aljamhoor

PREFACE

This work is the result of the collaboration between Muslim brothers who have a mutual interest in making such a book available in the English language. Our goal is to serve a long-standing need on the part of Muslim youth in Western societies where the younger generations have been rent asunder by the overt disregard and abandonment of moral values and ideals on a very broad scale

On the one hand, the book has been particularly selected due to its concise, yet thorough treatment of the subject, and on the other because of its interactive dialogue format, which makes real the expression of positive parental response to the legitimate concerns of young people on the verge of becoming adults

The communicative approach to translation has been adopted since it attempts to produce an effect on the readers of the target language translation equivalent to the effect the source language text has had on its readers. This is carried out through the study of the active interaction between form and content

We ask Allah to bless this effort, and make it of benefit to those who read it. May it be a continuing source of accumulating good deeds for us after we are returned to our Creator. And peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet, his progeny and companions, and all who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Resurrection.

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Introduction

Verily, all praise is due to Allah . We praise Him, ask Him for assistance, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the grave consequences of our actions. Whomever Allah guides will never go astray, and whomever Allah sends astray will never be guided. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger

At one time, we all were children and we frequently asked such questions as: when would we become adults? What is the turning point between childhood and adulthood? When is one considered a child, and when is one considered an adult

Puberty marks the stage of religious obligation, which is the turning point from childhood to adulthood. When a person reaches puberty, he bids farewell to childhood, and leaves behind its affairs. The stage of puberty is characterized by various physical, mental and psychological changes. These changes do not always occur simultaneously. The remarkable increase in growth rate and the alteration of the voice quality and other physical signs may occur; all for a purpose known only to Allah. This period also witnesses changes in reasoning patterns and emotions

All these changes prepare one to enter a new stage and begin a new type of life. This is because Allah has created mankind to worship Him; and to do so in the most perfect manner will certainly shed some light on the wisdom behind creation. At this stage, religious obligation begins and one becomes responsible for his deeds

At this stage, boys and girls encounter a new world, and they usually have many questions in mind. However, the answers to these questions are not readily available because specialized books dealing with such a sensitive issue as puberty from a religious perspective are rare. Besides, when childhood shyness persists, it often stands as a barrier to asking questions of a sensitive nature

For these reasons, I have written this book hoping that it may introduce young youth to the stage of puberty. It is presented in the form of a dialogue between a father and his son to emphasize the important role

played by the parents in educating their children, especially at this transitional stage

A writer is likely to face many difficulties when addressing his work to a generation younger than his own. He may not be able to choose the words most appropriate for this sector of audience; he may also over-emphasize a point, which is already clear to them, or he may oversimplify points that require deeper analysis

However, I have put forth my best effort in this work, drawing upon my adulthood experiences as well as those deriving from my present career as a teacher. I have already read many books and articles on the topics discussed and I hope that these varied sources would have helped me to overcome many of the difficulties previously mentioned

It is Allah Who provides success in all matters. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger, and all who follow his guidance

Mohammed Abdullah Addawish

The Age of Religious Obligation

Q: Dad, we agreed yesterday to discuss, from an Islamic point of view, the issue of religious obligation and puberty. I think it is very important to define accurately the beginning of such a stage that marks someone's entry into maturity and legal responsibility in Islam

A: Yes, this is central to our discussion of this period of life. We need to specify the age of religious obligation and puberty before speaking about any other issue. Since puberty represents legal obligation and responsibility in Islam, Islamic Shari 'ah (body of laws) mentions certain clear indications which mark the beginning of this period in order not to be confused with other subsequent stages

Some of these signs are common to both sexes while others are peculiar to either sex. One of the common signs of puberty is the growing of pubic hair around the private parts (genitals). Boys are characterized by the excretion of sperms (seminal fluid) while girls are characterized by having menses, commonly known as 'period

Since all these indications are crystal clear, boys and girls do not have to wait for all the other indications to take place if they can notice or feel one of them. If one of these indications, becomes apparent, the boy or the girl is considered 'mature', legally speaking

Q: Dad, would you kindly remind me of some of the rulings concerning the excretion of sperms?

A: This is an important question, my son. When many young people reach puberty, they become surprised at such cases of excreting sperms whose rulings and details are not known to them

Sometimes, they feel embarrassed to ask about these things, which may lead to committing legal mistakes with no valid excuse. Instead, they should find a teacher or a learned person to ask

You should know, my son, that what is excreted due to sexual desire is of two kinds

1- Madhiyy (pre-seminal fluid) is a transparent substance produced on fondling and sexual longing. This substance is not ritually pure. One must clean his genitals and do ablutions, but no shower is needed

2- Maniyy (semen) is a thick white substance, which is ejaculated after an orgasm. This is ritually impure. And so, it is obligatory to take a shower to remove the ritual impurity

If semen is deliberately excreted by a fasting Muslim, his fasting is null. However, his fasting is valid if semen comes out unintentionally or during sleep

Q: Dad, some young students become in a state of ritual impurity when they are at school, however, they would perform the Thuhr (noon) prayer (or whatever obligatory prayer) without purifying themselves

This is something serious and dangerous, my son. A Muslim is not allowed to pray while he is in a state of ritual impurity. Shyness should not prevent him from asking for permission to go home. If he is not allowed to go home, he may postpone the prayer until he goes back home. Then, he should take a shower and perform the postponed prayer

Q: Now I know the signs that mark the beginning of religious obligation, so what does religious obligation mean, dad?

A: Before reaching the age of puberty, you were not legally responsible for anything you did. Now, however, you have reached the stage of religious obligation, which means you are responsible for obligatory religious duties: acts of worship. You must consider personal hygiene; that is, to clean your private organs (genitals) after you have urinated or evacuated your bowels. You must also remove ritual impurity in case of

discharging semen either in erotic dreams or sexual intercourse. You must perform prayers regularly and perfectly and observe fasting during the month of Ramadan. You must perform Hajj when you can afford it, fight in the cause of Allah and enjoin good and forbid evil.

You are responsible now for your sins and wrong doings such as telling lies, backbiting, slandering, Undutifulness to parents, looking boldly at women except one's mother, sister, wife, and aunt, etc. Whenever you commit an unlawful act, it will be in your record and you will receive a punishment for it in the Hereafter except if you repent

Q: I understand this very well now, but if a young man is raised by an impious father who disobeys Allah's commandments, can this be an excuse for him?

A: No, my son, it cannot be an excuse for him since he is now responsible for his deeds. Neither his father nor anybody else will bear responsibility for his sins. If your father orders you to do unlawful things and prevents you from doing good, you are allowed not to listen to him. If you follow his instructions, you will bear the sin yourself, and he will bear nothing for you. Of course, he may be punished for encouraging you to commit these sins, for the Prophet salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam is reported to have said: "Whoever calls people to sins will have the same punishment as those who follow his call without any diminution in the punishment of the sinners." [Sahih Muslim]

Q: Does this mean that a young man whose parents do not wake him up for Fajr (dawn) prayer is not excused by Allah?

Of course, my son, he has to bear the responsibility himself and ask his parents or someone else to wake him up. If he cannot find someone to wake him up, he, should set an alarm clock, or ask one of his friends to give him a telephone call at the time of the prayer

Q: But, some young people claim that one is not responsible for his deeds if he is asleep. Is this true?

This can be true if someone has done everything in order to wake up at the time of the prayer, like going to bed early enough, having asked someone to wake him up. Also, if he has overslept, he would be excused. This actually happens in very rare cases. However, if he develops such a habit and the number of days on which he oversleeps outnumbers the number of days on which he wakes up for the prayer, it is an evidence of his carelessness and indifference

Q: I've got what you said, but some young people still claim that they are too young to observe obligatory duties. What do you say to this?

A: You know very well that Allah has created you, and He knows your capabilities, lusts, and desires more than you do. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Should not He Who created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous (to His slaves) All-Aware (of everything)."

And it is He Who has chosen this stage of your life to be the beginning of bearing responsibility. This means that you can observe obligatory duties. It also means that you are able to abstain from whatever Allah has forbidden

Religious Obligation and Legal Rulings

Q: Has Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence) set certain rulings on reaching the age after which a young man is regarded as a grown up other than those we have already mentioned?

A: Yes. When a young man reaches the age of religious obligation, he is responsible for all the rulings that apply to his elder peers without exception. Here are some of the rulings concerning this point

1- If he is an orphan, he becomes entitled to his own property, and so, the classification 'orphan' does not apply to him any longer. If a child inherits a sum of money, he would not be given the money until he becomes legally major. Only then, is he put to test to verify his discretion, If he proves to be discreet enough to handle his own money, it will be given to him. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: (And let orphans (as regards their intelligence) until they reach the age of marriage; if then you find sound judgement in them, release their property to them)

2- Unlike a child, if a Muslim adult commits a major crime such as robbery, murder, adultery, etc., he receives the prescribed punishment

3- His testimony before a court of law is valid and so legal verdicts can be based on it. If he testifies that he has seen the crescent marking the beginning of Ramadan, the month of fasting, his testimony will be taken into account, and Muslims will begin their fasting

Q: How did the prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) deal with young people who had just reached puberty?

A: This is a very good question. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) treated young men as full-fledged members of the Islamic society. As for Jihad (fighting in the cause of Allah) where there was killing and blood-shed that cannot be tolerated except by strong men, he used to allow young fighters who showed signs of fortitude to join the army. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) used to inspect the army and exclude very young men who had not reached puberty.

Puberty was then the criterion for discretion. Ibn Umar said: "the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) saw me on the day of Uhud when I was fourteen years old and set me aside. But when he saw me on the day of Khandaq (I was fifteen years old then) he allowed me to join the army

Imam Al-Shafi'iyy said: " The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) did not allow seventeen young people, who were only fourteen years old, to participate in the battle because he noticed that they did not reach puberty. A year later, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) allowed them to join the Jihad troops

Q: Has the age of religious obligation got any effect on dealings with the disbelievers? I mean, is there any difference between adult disbelievers and young ones?

A: Yes. If Muslims defeat a group of disbelievers and take someone as a captive, he will be treated as a man if he has already reached puberty (i.e. it is permissible to kill him, keep him as a slave, or set him free). However, it is not permissible to kill someone who has not reached puberty

Q: But what is the fate of young disbelievers who may be killed in the battle?

A: Their fate is the same as that of adult disbelievers; they all deserve Hellfire. This was what the Prophet did with Bani Quraidah (a Jewish tribe). When they submitted to the Prophet's judgement after the battle, he asked one of his companions, Sa'd Ibn Mu'athe to act as a judge in their case (according to Islamic Jurisprudence). All those who participated in the battle were sentenced to death. The Prophet commented on the verdict by saying: "It is in accordance with what Allah has ordained.

So, those people lived with their Jewish parents, and were brought up by them, but they were not excused by Allah. And since they fought against Muslims they were responsible for what they did

Q: Is there anything else that applies to adults, but not to young people in dealing with disbelievers?

A: Yes. When Muslims fight the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), they give them the liberty of either becoming Muslims, or keeping their religion on condition that they would pay Jizya (tribute). Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Fight against those who believe not in

Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and his Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued "

This Jizya is only taken from adult disbelievers. Sa'd Ibn Mu'athe narrated that the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) sent him to Yemen and ordered him to take from every adult disbeliever one dinar (the type of currency used then) or its equivalent in clothes or beasts of cattle

Reconsider Your Life

Q: What is the first piece of advice you would like to give to a person who has just reached puberty?

A: You have to compare your present life with your past one. Much of what used to be acceptable is no longer so now. Start with your worship of Allah. The fundamental act of worship is prayer as the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: "The first thing about which a person will be questioned on the Day of Judgement is his prayer. If his prayer is found to be valid and sufficient, he will be considered a winner of Allah's reward. If there is some sort of deficiency in his prayer, he will be a loser. If shortcomings are found in his obligatory prayers,

Allah will say: 'See if my servant has got some voluntary prayers in his record that may make up for the shortcomings in his obligatory prayers."' [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

If I ask you to pay great attention to obligatory prayer, this does not mean that I am accusing you of abandoning prayers completely. But, I am rather concerned about your performance. Do you perform your prayers with "due submission to Allah ? Do you perform them with tranquility (in bowing and prostrating)? Do you observe all their moral characteristics?

Then look at your relationship with your parents, and how much you take care of them

Allah has associated their rights with His

Again the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) regarded ingratitude to parents as equivalent to committing major sins. Anas said that when Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) was asked about the major sins, he said: "Associating partners with Allah in worship, ingratitude to one's parents, killing innocent souls, and giving a false testimony

Curb your tongue, Lower your gaze, and watch out for your other senses. Then, carefully select your friends

What I am trying to say is that you have said farewell to that stage of your life and become a man in the full sense of the word. Your ambition and

aspiration should not be confined to this life, but rather transcend it to the Hereafter. So you need to sit down and think a lot about yourself. Try to repair what you have impaired, and which does not please your Lord and Creator

Q: But some young people say, "Enjoy your youth and there will always be a time to make up for your carelessness when you are old." What do you think?

This logic is very far away from the truth for the following reasons

1- Real enjoyment is manifested in the worship of Allah and in the observance of His commandments. Unfortunately, those who turn away from their Lord do not realize this fact

2- Youth is the stage that should be utilized in righteous deeds. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) told us that on the Day of Judgement when the situation becomes so horrible and frightening and when the scorching sun blazes down upon the swarming masses of people, Allah favors a group of His worshippers by placing them under His shade. This group includes "a young man who has spent his youth in the worship and obedience of Allah.

Therefore, it is not possible to compare the transient worldly pleasures with everlasting bliss and joy

3- Everyone is going to be asked certain questions on the Day of Judgement. One of these questions will be about the way one has spent his youth. How do you think heedless and playful people would answer?

4- Youth is a period of energy, activity, and vitality. Once this period is over, one starts to deteriorate and become weaker and weaker. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Allah is He who created you in (a state of) weakness then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave (you) weakness and grey hair. He creates what he wills. And it is He who is the All-Omniscient. And the All-Powerful."

Will a sane person say: "I would delay obedience and worship of my Lord until old age?

Now, let me ask you this question: who can guarantee that he will live until he makes old bones. One may die while he is still young! However, if he were guaranteed to live a very long life, would repentance in old age be guaranteed?

Cut off in their Prime

Q: Yes, dad, this is something that most people forget. Would you give me some examples of people who died very young?

A: Yes, my son. Omair Ibn Abi Waqqas was only sixteen years old when he fell in action in the battle of Badr together with a number of other young martyrs including Harithah Ibn Al-Nu'man and Mu'athe Ibn Al-Harith

As for contemporary examples, I know some of them. Three young secondary school students - may Allah have mercy upon their souls - died at about the same age. One of them asked me a week before he died: "If someone died and his burial was delayed, would he be asked about his Lord, religion, and Prophet?" I told him, "O my son, what should concern you is that you will be certainly asked after your death, no matter how and when, and it is important to get ready for such a moment." Neither he nor I had thought that it was only a few days before he would be put in that situation. The other one was a very intelligent and energetic young man. All people around him had great hope in his future. He sat for the final exam of his secondary school and died before getting the results. The third one had already got his university degree and was looking for a job in order to start a career and so would be able to get married. He was coming back from Makkah after performing Umrah (minor pilgrimage) when he died in an accident a few miles away from his hometown

I knew two other righteous young people. One of them attended the university for one week, and the other was about to finish his Master's degree. They both died when they were coming home from the sacred city of Makkah

The images of those righteous young people are still present in my mind. May Allah bestow His mercy on their souls

They might have been thinking of the future, and their parents might have had great expectations about them in this life. However, they were gone for good

Q: Has it ever occurred to anyone that he can escape death?

A: It is enough to listen to this example. A young man who belonged to a righteous family took the vicious way of drugs. He started to deteriorate until one day when he dropped dead of an extra dose. He was not quite twenty when he died. May Allah forgive him. Moreover, many young people die in their prime nowadays in road accidents and otherwise.

Fraternity and Friendship

Q: Dad, you told me to reconsider my friendships; does this mean I should live in seclusion and isolation and make friends with nobody?

A: Not at all. I am not asking you to do this, but I am only asking you to make friends with righteous and upright people. You will find with them whatever you look for among other people. You will find enjoyment, pleasure, and dispelling of worries. In addition, there will be great heavenly virtues awaiting those who associate with the pious and the righteous

Q: Could you please mention some of these virtues?

A: Yes, some of these virtues are

1- A true believer, as the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said, is going to reunite on the Day of Judgment with those whom he loves. If he loves righteous people, he will meet them in Paradise, their eternal abode

2- A pious companion, as the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said, is like a perfume-seller. He will either give you some perfume as a gift, you will buy some off him, or you will smell the fragrance of his merchandise

3- Allah bestows His grace on those who love each other for His sake by sheltering them under His shade on the Day of Judgment when the scorching sun blazes down on the swarming masses of people, lining their heads with streams of sweat. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: "Seven types of people will be sheltered under the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgment when there will be no other shade except His. These are: a just ruler; a young man who spends his youth in the worship and service of Allah ; one whose heart is perpetually attached to the mosque; two such persons who love each other for the sake of Allah , they keep company for His sake and part company for his sake; a man who is seduced into adultery by an attractive woman of consequences but he declines, saying that he fears Allah ; one who

donates charity without making it known to anybody; and one who remembers Allah in solitude so that his eyes overflow with tears." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

4- Also, those who love one another because of fear from Allah's Majesty and Magnificence will be granted lighted high seats in Paradise, and will be an object of admiration by prophets and martyrs

5- The relationship between those who love each other for the sake of Allah will remain unchanged until the Day of Judgment, the day when one will escape from his father, mother, and children. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: (Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another except Al-Muttaqun (i.e. pious and righteous people who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden), and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained.

6- Allah, my son, loves those who love each other for His sake. It was narrated in the Traditions of the Rightly-Guided Muslims that Abu Idris Al-Kholani came to Mu'athe and said: "O Mu'athe! I love you for the sake of Allah." Mu'athe replied: "Here is the glad tiding, for I have heard the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) say: "Allah has said: 'It is incumbent upon me to bestow My love on those who love each other for My sake, meet one another for My sake, visit one another for My sake, and sustain each other for My sake

Q: May Allah reward you, dad. They are actually great virtues and I feel that anyone of these virtues is good enough to encourage a young man to make friends with such types of people. But, among those friends there may occur some clashes in opinions and disagreement on certain issues, which may result in feud, and grudge. Would not this deprive them from Allah 's grace on the Day of Judgement?

A: People, my son, are not faultless. Brothers and friends, sometimes, disagree. However, this should not last for long. Everybody should try to treat his brother and friends with a pure, honest heart. As a result, Allah bestows his grace on them as He says in the Noble Qur'an: "And we shall remove from their hearts any sense of injury (that they may have), so that they will be like brothers facing each other on thrones.)

Q: But, dad, suppose there is a young man who is not very keen on worship and who says to himself: "I am a hypocrite; how can I make friends with such decent people?" He then may think of abandoning them. Is this correct?

A: No, my son, it is Satan who makes him think in this way, since he is keen on misleading Allah's servants. But as he knows that true friendship brings about peace of mind, he tries hard to prevent him from such a bliss. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ariyy narrated that a man asked the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) about a person who likes people but does not associate with them. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) answered him saying: "A person will be with those whom he loves." Abu

Hurairah narrated that Allah's Messenger said: "Allah has some angels who look for those who remember Allah on the roads and paths. And when they find some people remembering Allah, they call each other saying, 'Come to the object of your pursuit.' Then the angels encircle them with their wings up to the nearest heaven to us. After those people have remembered Allah, the angels go back to their Lord Who asks them although He knows best: 'What do My slaves say?' The angels reply: 'They say: 'Subhan Allah, Allahu Akbar, Alhamdu Lillah and they glorify You.' Allah then asks: 'Did they see Me?' The angels reply: 'No, by Allah, they didn't see You.' Allah asks: 'How would it be if they saw Me?' The angels reply: 'If they saw You, they would worship You more devoutly and remember You more deeply, and declare Your freedom from any resemblance to anything more often.' Allah asks: 'What do they ask Me for?' The angels reply: 'They ask You for Paradise.' Allah asks: 'Did they see it?' The angels reply: 'No, by Allah, they did not see it.' Allah asks: 'How it would be if they saw it?' The angels reply: 'If they saw it, they would have greater covetousness for it and would seek it with greater zeal and would have greater desire for it.' Allah asks: 'From what do they seek refuge?' The angels reply: 'They seek refuge from Hellfire' Allah asks: `Did they see it?

The angels reply: 'No, by Allah, they did not see it.' Allah asks: 'How would it be if they saw it?' The angels reply: If they saw it, they would flee from it as fast as they could and would have extreme fear from it.' Then Allah says: 'I make you witnesses that I have forgiven them.' (Allah's Messenger added) One of the angels would say: 'There was so and so amongst them, and he was not one of them, but he had just come for some need.' Allah would say: 'These are those people whose companions will not be reduced to misery.'" [Sahih Al-Bukhari.]

When this is applied to someone who has come and sat with them for a totally different purpose, how about the one who likes them, and intends sitting with them when he comes. He also forsakes worldly pleasures and bad places in order to keep their company. He always wishes to be like them and blames himself all the time for his laziness and inefficiency in worshipping Allah

Q: This is the case of righteous companions, what about evil companions?

A: I have seldom seen a righteous young person who changes into a bad person unless there are bad companions behind the change. Therefore, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) warned us against bad companions and gave us a very illustrative example of them when he said: "A good companion and an evil companion are like a perfume-seller and a blacksmith. The perfume-seller will either give you some perfume as a gift, or you will buy some off him; but the blacksmith will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad odor from him

Part of the evil role played by those bad companions can be summed up in the following points

1- They speak to those who sit with them about their rude practices and licentious adventures. Sometimes, they make up stories that have never happened to vie in boasting with their friends and peers

2- They teach their companions ways of evil doings. They take their companions by stealthy degrees towards evil and pave the way for them

3- Their company weakens one's Faith. And so will be more vulnerable to committing sins and forbidden things

4- When they see someone keen on his worship, they make fun of him, which may contribute to his abandonment of such good deeds

Q: But, dad, when a young person is asked to avoid a bad colleague or friend, he usually says that that friend or colleague is a relative, or a neighbor

A: Many people, my son, mistakenly understand the concept of a bad companion. He is anyone who calls for or encourages disobedience to Allah, and makes it easy through words and deeds either directly or indirectly. He may be a relative (close or distant) a neighbor, or even a brother; but terms of kinship cannot be an excuse for not avoiding and abandoning him. The righteous companion, on the other hand, is the one

who helps his friends to serve and worship Allah and enjoins virtue through words and deeds

Q: Some young people say that they make friends and sit with those people, but they are also aware of good and evil. They may also say that they talk with those people in school only to entertain and amuse themselves without being influenced by them

A: No, my son, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is a trustworthy advisor. He warned us against such people. He told us that they are like a blacksmith whose company influences those around him. If a good Muslim keeps the company of a bad Muslim, he may gain a bad reputation, or destroy his religion or life through a serious misfortune or catastrophe. Moreover, this false excuse is one of Satan's mischievous ways to deceive human beings so that he can throw them in an environment of corruption and depravation

If we assume that those bad companions would not influence him in anyway, which is not true, it is most likely that he will follow their example. Once he likes them, he will be reunited with them on the Day of Judgment

The Problem of Lust

Q: You've told me a lot about the advantages and bright aspects of this period of entering manhood, but doesn't it have its own problems and difficulties?

A: This is a crucial question. You know that Satan is eager to tempt and seduce human beings. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Satan said: 'Because You have sent me astray, surely I will lie in wait for them (human beings) on Your straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right, and from their left, and you will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You '

Therefore, the fight between Satan and a young man reaches its climax when the young man reaches the age of religious obligation

It is Allah's wisdom to make the way to His Paradise hard and difficult, and the way to the Hell full of desires. In other words, the road to Hell is closer than that to Paradise. The Prophet(salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: "Hellfire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of disliked undesirable things." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Thus, desires and lust start to appear in this stage of someone's life in order to distinguish those who can resist the temptation from those who cannot. But, if the way to Paradise were furnished with flowers, everybody would take it

Q: Would you like to tell me more about these desires?

A: Yes, my son, they are so many, varying in strength and scope. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allah has the excellent return (Paradise with flowering rivers, etc.) with Him."

As for their varying nature, they differ from one person to another and from one environment to another. However, the influence of sexual desire on young people is the strongest and most dangerous, especially in the present time. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) warned us against that when he said: "I am not leaving behind a more harmful trial (cause of mischief) for men than women." The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) also said: "A person who gives surety to (safeguard) what is between his jaws (tongue) and what is between his two legs (private organs), I guarantee his entrance into Paradise." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) was asked about the things, which cause most people to enter Paradise. He answered: "Being careful about ones obligations to Allah, and good behavior." Then, he was asked: "What are these things, which would lead a person into Hellfire?" He answered: "His mouth and genitals." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Q: You have come close to home when you spoke about this desire. May I ask more questions about it?

A: Go ahead, son

Q: Some young people say that Allah is All-Omniscient and All-Wise, so they wonder if there is any apparent wisdom that a Muslim can see behind afflicting people with such a strong desire?

A: You should know, my son, that a Muslim is not allowed to question or object to Allah's commandments. He must submit to whatever comes from his Lord and believe in it whether or not he knows the wisdom behind it. However, if he knows the wisdom, his Faith will become more firm

One wisdom behind sexual desire is to sustain the human race by means of reproduction. Therefore, the two sexes are attracted to each other in order to achieve this end. Again, as mentioned earlier, one of the greatest pieces of wisdom is affliction and trial. If the way of obedience is hard, it will not be taken except by honest and pious people who are characterized by patience and fortitude, or else it will be open to everybody

Q: I think the first step a wise man should take is to know the temptations that may enkindle such a desire so that he may avoid them. Is that so?

A: Certainly. One should avoid the things that may stir up desires and lust

Q: What are the most dangerous of such temptations?

On top of such temptations is looking boldly at a woman as an object of sexual desire. This serves as a stimulus that may lead to an unlawful response. Also, it is the first step towards major sins. Allah warns us against such a forbidden look; He says in the Noble Qur'an: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do"

Because of its dangerous consequences, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) warned his companions against looking at forbidden things. He said: "Refrain from sitting in the streets." The companions submitted: "O Messenger of Allah, we have no other alternative, there is no other place where we can sit and discuss things." He said: "If that is so, then observe your responsibilities due to the street." The companions asked as to what was due to the street? He said: "lower your gazes, clear the street

off obstacles, return greetings, and enjoin virtuous deeds and forbid evil ones

I can gather from this that a Muslim should be on his guard and keep away from places where he would look at forbidden things. Is that right?

Yes, my son, in the previous saying, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) ordered them not only to avoid looking at forbidden things, but also to avoid sitting in streets. The Prophet said so although the streets of Madinah then were different from the streets nowadays, which are full of unveiled women, who tend to display their charm. The women then were veiled, and showed signs of shamefulness; and so they would stick themselves to the walls while walking without a legal escort

Q: Why is looking at a woman so dangerous?

A: This is because it is oftentimes followed by serious consequences. When someone looks at a woman, he pictures her as an object of sexual desire. And the image develops in his mind. Satan, then, beautifies this image and brings it back in his mind with all sorts of desirable animation. When this is repeated, it develops into an obsession; and one may be haunted by such an image in his prayers

When someone is obsessed by a certain idea, there is always the possibility that such an idea might materialize into tangible action. The whole thing starts with an intention perceived, then the intention develops into determination, followed by vicious scheming, which eventually

results in committing adultery. If this were not the outcome, thinking would lead to masturbation

Q: : Dad, I have an important question about masturbation, but I will put it off until later. For now, I have another important question about looking at women. What would you say to those young men who watch actresses in movies or view pictures of women in magazines; and their excuse is that there is no harm in just doing that?

A: This is the same as looking at women in person; there is no difference, since both actions will lead to the same result

Q: What if the whole matter is confined to a mere thought, I mean no action is taken. Would you say something like 'it's the thought that counts?

A: One of the epithets of Allah is the Merciful; and so He does not punish His slaves except for the sins that they actually commit. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said: "Allah forgives my followers those (evil deeds) their ownselves may suggest to them as long as they do not act." But, thinking about women in a persistent way may lead to the unlawful act of adultery. I would advise you and every young man to engage yourselves in things that will benefit you in this

world and in the Hereafter. Be careful when such thoughts cross your mind; try to stop them right away and replace them with better thoughts

Q: Dad, how can I put a curb on my desires?

A: The best thing to do is to maintain a strong Faith in Allah. This is the most effective weapon against desires. I am telling you this because the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have said that there would come a time when Faith would become dear. And Mu'athe -I used to call one of his friends and say to him: "Let's sit and spend some time increasing our Faith

Q: And what are some of the things that we can do to increase our Faith?

A: Faith increases along with submission to Allah. Good deeds, like reading the Noble Qur'an and reflecting on its meanings, remembering Allah , and contemplating on His creation, also increase Faith

Then you have to fear Allah in the most appropriate manner, and observe your duties to Him wherever you are. That is because a true believer should know that Allah encompasses everything, and that nothing is hidden from Him. Not even an atom escapes His knowledge. Allah says of Himself in the Noble Qur'an: "And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden [the Unseen]), none knows them but He. And He

knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record) And He also says: (Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed. Everything with Him is in (due) proportion. All-Omniscient of the unseen and the seen, the Most Great, the Most High. It is the same (to Him) whether any of you conceal his speech or declare it openly, whether he be hid by night or go forth freely by day"

Allah knows whoever commits unlawful acts in broad daylight and whoever commits them behind closed doors. And if a believer is well aware of this fact, he will fear Allah. You remember that saying by the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) where he names the types believers that will be under Allah's shade on the Day of Judgement? One of them is a man who is being seduced by a beautiful woman, but he says: "I fear Allah

Q: Dad, what is next?

A: One has to remember that he will stand before Allah on the Day of Reckoning when all secrets are disclosed. Nothing will be hidden from Him, and the mouths of the disbelievers will be sealed and their limbs will testify against them. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Till, when they reach it (Hellfire), their hearing (ears) and their eyes, and their skins will testify against them as to what they used to do". Now, let me ask you if it

is possible for a person to do wrong without his limbs being present with him? Allah answers this question in the Noble Qur'an: "And you have not been hiding yourselves (in the world), lest your ears, and your eyes, and your skins testify against you; but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing"

Q: Is there anything else?

A: Yes son, a believer has to remember what Allah has in store on the Day of Resurrection for those who obey His commandments and keep away from what He has forbidden

Q: You mean the maidens of Paradise?

A: Exactly! These are the chaste women of Paradise that Allah describes in the Noble Qur'an: "Verily, We have created them (maidens) of a special creation and made them virgins. Loving (their husbands only), equal in age, for those on the Right Hand". And the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is reported to have described them saying: "The first group (of people) who will enter Paradise will be (glittering) like a full-moon. They will neither spit therein nor blow their noses nor relieve nature. Their utensils therein will be of gold and their combs of gold and silver; in their censers the aloeswood will be used, and their sweat will smell like musk. Everyone of them will have two wives; the marrow of the bones of the wives' legs will be seen through the flesh out of excessive beauty. They (i.e. the people of Paradise) will neither have

differences nor hatred amongst themselves; their hearts will be as if one heart, and they will be glorifying Allah in the morning and in the afternoon

Q: What else, Dad?

A: You have to turn to Allah , following the example of the Prophet Joseph when the woman whom he worked for tried to seduce him. The Noble Qur'an gives an account of he said: "O my Lord, the prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. Unless you turn away their plot from me, I will feel inclined towards them and be one (of those who commit sin and deserve blame or those who do deeds) of the ignorant"

My son, turn to your Lord, raise your hands humbly to Allah in supplication, and realize that Allah will not turn away those who ask Him

Besides, you have to strengthen your will. You have to train yourself to leash uncontrollable desires; you must never surrender to them. But you have to know that this requires a tremendous amount of training, because you are struggling against your vicious instincts, which are amplified and supported by the accursed Satan

Q: Is that all?

A: No, son, there remains an important issue that was always highlighted by the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam)

Q: You mean marriage, don't you?

A: Of course, son, may Allah grant you success in your life. Marriage enables one to enjoy what Allah has made lawful for him. This will surely prevent him from indulging in forbidden pleasures. And if a person of your age cannot afford to get married, he has to observe fast on those days, which were favored by the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam), such as Mondays and Thursdays, or whatever is most convenient. Fasting, as you know, infuses piety in the heart. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may develop piety"

Moreover, fasting strengthens the will and determination, and qualifies you to defeat your vicious instincts

Q: Dad, what about masturbation?

A: O my son, it is a filthy and blameworthy habit. Moreover, it is forbidden according to the Noble Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "And those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts, from illegal sexual acts . Except from their wives or (the captives and slaves) that their right hands possess. For them, they are free from blame

This verse indicates that true believers should guard their private parts from illegal sexual activity. There are two permissible outlets for satisfying sexual desire. These are one's wife and one's possession of captives and slaves. Therefore, no one besides these two is permissible

Also, practicing this blameworthy habit adversely affects the health (leads to health problems). For instance, it affects the erectness of the penis, which will bother a man when attempting to have an intercourse with his wife. It will also decrease the potency of his sperms. Moreover, masturbation causes poor digestion and weakens the pituitary gland, which affects reproduction

Besides, masturbation is a main cause of psychological disturbances, like depression and anxiety. Ejaculation of sperms due to masturbation is usually followed by fits of remorse, which develops later into a sense of indifference. What is worse is that one may practice this habit in a place where he cannot remove his ritual impurity by taking a shower, causing him to either miss the prayers in their appointed time, or perform them in a state of ritual impurity; and in either case, he will be sinful

Q: So Dad, how can one quit this filthy habit?

A: In order to quit this habit, one has to practice a few things. First, one should strengthen his belief in Allah. Second, one should lower his gaze and avoid thinking about lust. Third, one should avoid being alone.

Fourth, one should keep himself busy with beneficial activities such as reading

Love and Passion

Q: Dad, some youth indulge in unlawful passions. What would you say to them?

A: To be a victim of unlawful passion is a dangerous matter because it is likely to bring about a series of unlawful deeds. First, if this passion leads to unlawful sex, it will incur a lot of sins; and if sexual desire is not satisfied, sorrow will remain in the heart. Second, a lover is usually preoccupied by his mistress, and this keeps him from his religious duties as well as his worldly commitments. And when these symptoms persist, they develop into pain and anguish. Third, such an obsession is likely to keep him away from loving Allah. Eventually, his mistress will be on top oh his priorities

Moreover, it is claimed that someone's last words before his death are the dress of the thoughts that have always occupied his heart. I was told that there was a young man who fell deeply in love with a girl called Islam. But as that love was not reciprocal, he got a broken heart, and he fell ill. His condition then deteriorated, and the last words he uttered on his deathbed were: " O Islam! I prefer your love to the Mercy of Allah." The indication is that love can lead to a disastrous end. These are the

dangerous consequences of unlawful love. Now, you are probably wondering about the solutions

Fill your heart with the love of Allah and remember Him all the time. Spend some time every day reading the Noble Qur'an. Associate with righteous people. Lower your gaze. Avoid forbidden love, and try to nip it in the bud, because once it develops, it will be difficult to stop

Puberty

Q: Is it true that puberty is a stage of loss and deviation from the Right Path?

A: No, my son. The more a person develops physically and psychologically, the more he becomes inclined to seriousness in religion as well as worldly matters. Allah nourishes this inclination as one approaches puberty. Therefore, those who get lost and deviate from the Right Path are those who reject religion and run wildly after their desires, instead

Q: Dad, why is it that so many young men and women are leading a careless life nowadays?

A: Well, son, youth are full of energy; and if this energy is not vented in an appropriate manner, they are expected to lead a life void of morals and ideals. They will not pay the slightest attention to the outcome of their deeds. And if they do not keep their souls busy with obedience to Allah, they will definitely commit sins. However, past generations of young Muslims were so keen on keeping themselves busy with worthy commitments, such as fighting in the cause of Allah, learning and seeking knowledge, etc. Even in rural communities, where young people worked with their parents mostly as farmers and shepherds, you would not find so much carelessness because their vigor was properly utilized

Q: Dad, why are some youth tough on their parents, and they seldom take any of their advice; they do not even show any response to it? Does this have anything to do with puberty?

A: Yes, my son. Many young people are indifferent to their elders, because they are usually self-centered at this stage. They tend to oppose whoever they think has authority over them, including their parents and teachers. Their primary concern at this stage is to establish an independent personality. They feel they have reached full manhood or womanhood and they are no longer in need of others. Therefore, everyone has to listen to whatever they say with due respect. However, what makes matters worse are two factors

1- They lack the experience that accumulates during one's life, which is very important for developing opinions of their own

2- Some parents treat their 'big' children as if they are still little kids. So the children feel as though they are not getting the respect they really deserve. And naturally, their response to parents' advice is usually negative

Q: Dad, some students at this stage tend to oppose their teachers; is it for the same reasons?

A: Yes son, for the same reasons, which make school boys and girls at this stage rebel against their teachers and refuse to respond to them

Q: You mentioned that one reason for this phenomenon is that some parents treat their 'big' children as if they are still little kids. Why do they treat them like this?

A: Some reasons are related to the children themselves, and others are related to the parents. The most important reason is that some youth enter this stage while still behaving like children, and their concerns are still childish. They are still attached to their toys. Besides, when a young man notices signs of puberty, he exaggerates his own capabilities. Therefore, his opinions may not be mature yet, and so, elderly people will treat him accordingly. A young man is so attached to his friends that he is more

attentive to them than he is to his parents or teachers. Unfortunately, the advice of peer groups is not always sound

Q: Dad, why is the behavior of the youth often characterized by rebellion and stubbornness?

A: That is because they regard such behavior as a way of impressing others and imposing their own individual characters on them

Q: Dad, but this can have adverse consequences, can't it ?

A: Of course, son. This behaviour seldom achieves its objectives. Others will often be on the aggressive, even if they are convinced of an opinion that is imposed on them

Q: But I have seen some youth get what they want through rebellion and stubbornness

A: That is true. They may succeed in that, but those who respond to their requests do so out of desperation. These youth may receive a limited benefit, but they lose the respect of their elders, which is more valuable than what they get

Q: Then how can an adult convince his elders that he has become a grown up man?

A: To begin with, he has to prove to them that his lifestyle has changed by leaving behind the concerns of young children, by adopting the manners typical of grown ups, and by giving elderly people the respect they deserve. He also has to prove to them that he can bear responsibility for himself by properly attending to his commitments. Only then can he propose his own opinions and expect others to listen to them. However, time is very important. That is, things should not be hurried. Finally, when some people underestimate a young person's real capabilities, he has to be patient and tolerant

Parents' Rights

Q: Dad, I have seen something which annoys me. That is, some youth treat their parents badly, and the only excuse for this bad treatment is that the parents do not let them do what they want, or they treat them as if they are still little kids. Moreover, I know that this is not a valid excuse. Can you elaborate on this?

A: May Allah bless you, my son. It is shameful to see a Muslim youth raise his voice when speaking to his parents or treat them badly, forgetting about their rights, which are clearly enunciated in the Noble Qur'an where Allah associates His own rights with theirs: "And your Lord

has decreed that you worship none but Him. Moreover, that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor"

Allah orders the believers to submit themselves in humility to their parents. He says in the Noble Qur'an: "And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young'"

Jihad is considered the greatest of all Islamic duties. However, a Muslim cannot join the Jihad troops unless by his parents' leave. A man came to the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asking him for permission to join the army. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asked him: "Are your parents alive?" The man said: "Yes." The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Strive in their service." Another man came to the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and said: "I took an oath to emigrate from the disbelieves' society and I left my parents crying." The Prophet said: "Go back and make them happy as you made them cry." [Sahih AI-Bukhari]

Q: Then if Islam places filial dutifulness in such a high position, then there must be a great reward for it

A: Yes, of course. Islam has provided a great reward. First, obedience to parents is considered obedience to Allah. So if a person fulfills his parents' requests, he is obeying Allah. Second, their satisfaction leads to Allah's satisfaction. So if a person satisfies his parents, then Allah will be

satisfied with him. On the other hand, if a person makes his parents dissatisfied, then Allah will be dissatisfied with him. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "The satisfaction of Allah is in the satisfaction of parents." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) also said: "May he be disgraced; may he be disgraced who finds his parents (one or both) approaching old age and does not enter Paradise by rendering services to them." [Sahih Muslim]

The third reward is that Allah will answer the invocation of those who are dutiful to their parents. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) told his companions about a man named Uwais Al Qami who so dutiful to his mother that whenever he asked Allah for something, Allah would fulfill it for him [Sahih Muslim]

Q: Dad, if this is the reward for observing parents' rights, then what is the punishment for not observing such rights?

A: Not observing parents' rights is a great calamity, which leads to grave consequences. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) associated disobedience to parents with Shirk (associating partners with Allah in worship; major polytheism).

Anas Ibn Maalik asked the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) about the major sins. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) answered: "Associating partners with Allah, disobedience to parents, murder and bearing false witness. Abu Bakr mentioned that the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) explained that disobedience would speed up the coming of punishment in this world

This means that when someone disobeys his parents, it may drive them angry, and so they may invoke Allah against him. Surely, such an invocation may be answered. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Three invocations are undoubtedly answered: the invocation of parents against their undutiful children, the invocation of a traveller, and the invocation of the oppressed." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Q: What is the worst type of disobedience?

A: The worst type of disobedience is the refusal of the child to do the good deeds, which are urged and recommended by the parents

Q: But some youth may claim that they are undutiful to their parents just because the parents deny them their rights. What do you think of this?

A: My son, there is nothing more serious than committing Shirk, However, Allah orders us in the Noble Qur'an to be dutiful to our parents even if they commit Shirk themselves and urge us to commit it ourselves: "But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your

return, and I shall tell you what you used to do". It is clear then that you do not obey them in terms of Shirk, but obey those who call you to the Path of Allah . Nevertheless, you are requested to treat them in the best manner

Q: We can say then that if parents are not observing the duties of Islam properly, we still have to treat them kindly. Is that right?

A: Absolutely. Allah orders us to treat parents respectfully even if they are struggling to turn us away from Islam by calling us to Shirk. All we have to do is invite them with wisdom to Islam. In addition, when one's parents are sinful, one has to be patient with them

The respect due to parents is a natural right, and does not depend on how they treat their children. Being tough on their children may be for a good reason. They may have the intention to correct a disagreeable behavior

Intense Emotions

Q: Dad, let us now shift to another topic. Some youth get so angry that they cannot control their reactions. Does this have anything to do with reaching puberty?

A: Yes, my son. Some young people are characterized by intense emotions at this stage. When they get angry, they shout at the top of their voices. They break things and treat their elders badly. Anger, my son, must be suppressed because it may cause a lot of trouble. Some young

people often beat their breasts when they have acted irrationally out of anger

One day a man came to the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asking him for a piece of advice regarding good manners. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Do not get angry." When the man repeated his request, the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) gave him the same advice. Then the man said: When I thought about what the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) had said, I realized that anger is the root of all evil." This, my son, is a proof that anger may cause one to do things that he will regret for the rest of his life

Allah likes those who control their emotions and restrain themselves when they get angry

Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "Those who spend (in Allah's Cause deeds of charity, alms, etc.) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men: verily, Allah loves the good doers". And: "And those who avoid the greater sins, and Al-Fawahish (illegal sexual intercourse, etc.), and when they are angry, forgive"

Q: My Dad, this discussion about uncontrolled anger reminds me of another thing; that is going to extremes when evaluating other people, which I have frequently noticed among my peers. When they like somebody, they exaggerate in describing his merits, and when

they dislike somebody, they shift to a different tone. Does this have anything to do with reaching puberty?

A: Yes. Young people tend to exaggerate their feelings of liking and disliking, and that is due to the intensity of emotions characteristic of young age

Q: I think the enemies of Islam realize this fact, and they act accordingly. They try hard to turn young people away from true guidance through many kinds of unlawful entertainment

A: Yes, son, you are right. The enemies of Islam have always sought to seduce Muslim youth through the media, especially those satellite channels, which are beamed to the remotest parts of the world

Q: Dad, is there anything one can do to protect himself from this seduction?

A: The best thing to do is to read the stories of those early Muslims who helped raise the banner of Islam. They are good examples that should be followed. And the Noble Qur'an is full of stories of righteous people who spent all their lives in the cause of Allah. There are also the stories of Allah's Messengers whose struggle against disbelievers is a chain of great lessons for us to learn

When good examples are set before young men and women, they can hardly be seduced by insignificant people

Examples of Righteous People

Q: Dad, would you like to shed more light on some examples of righteous people, especially when they were young?

A: Yes, my son. Allah has mentioned the story of the Prophet Joseph. He was a good example of abstinence. He was young and single when the woman whom he worked for tried to seduce him in order to have sex with her. She was not only beautiful, but also a woman of consequences, she was the Prime Minister's wife. She went to him and closed the door behind her. She threatened to put him in jail if he rejected her. With all of this temptation, seduction and above all threats, he turned to Allah, saying: "I seek refuge in Allah (or Allah forbid)! Truly, he (your husband) is my master! He made my living in a great comfort! (So I will never betray him). Verily, the Thalimun (wrong and evildoers) will never be successful). He would rather go to jail than commit adultery. You know, when a young Muslim reads this story and realizes the message intended, I think he will think twice before committing adultery

Another example of sincere affiliation to religion is Khabbaab Ibn Al-Araat. When his acceptance of Islam became known, the disbelievers tortured him severely. He was raked naked over glowing coal until

permanent scars marked his entire body. However, they did not manage to turn him away from his religion. The admiration held by the Prophet's companions to Khabbaab is quite known. On his way to Makkah, Ali Ibn Abi Talib passed by the grave of Khabbaab. He stopped for a while and said: "May Allah have mercy on Khabbaab; he accepted Islam and emigrated to Madinah, following the orders of the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). His whole life was devoted to fighting in the cause of Allah. He was severely tortured, but never gave up. May Allah give him the best reward." My son, this companion was almost of your age when he did all this

The highest example of determination ever found among the young companions of the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) is Al-Harith who was killed in the battle of Badr. His mother came to the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! You know how dear Harith was to me. If he is in Paradise, I will be patient and expect Allah to reward me for what he did; but if he is not, you will see what I will do. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Woe to you! Is there only one Paradise? There is more than one. And your son is in Firdaws (the best of all

Another example of great determination is the story of Umair Ibn Abi Waqqaas, a 16-year old companion of the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). His brother Sa'd narrated: "I saw my brother, Umair before the inspection of the troops trying to hide himself. When I asked him why he was doing this, he said: 'I'm afraid the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) will consider me too young to join the army.' He wanted very

much to get killed in the battlefield, and so be a martyr. Then the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) came and examined him. He found him too young and sent him back. Umair cried so bitterly that the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) had not let him join his troops as a soldier. The young warrior had to shorten the sword belt so that it would not touch the ground. And he was killed

Many of the Prophet's (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) companions were less than twenty years old when they fought side by side with him

An outstanding example of Muslim youth in the field of memorizing the Noble Qur'an is Umar Ibn Salama. He memorized the entire body of verses as they were revealed one by one; that is, before being compiled in a bound form. As a reward for this, he was always given a special treatment

In the field of seeking knowledge, Mu'athe Ibn Jabal was described by the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) as the most learned person in matters of what is lawful and what is not. He was not quite twenty when he accepted Islam

Ibn Umar, the son of the second Caliph, is a good example of those who devoted their lives to the worship of Allah. He used to sleep a few hours, and then wake up to perform voluntary prayers

Muhammad Ibn Talhah was known as As-Sajjaad (the Prostrator) due to the great number of his prayers he used to perform

In sports, often practiced in preparation for Jihad, we find many examples of excellence. For instance, Abdullah Ibn Umar was a distinguished horse racer

Q: My dad, did the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) use to mention examples of such righteous people when he taught his companions?

A: Yes, son. When Khabbaab was being tortured he sent to the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) asking him to pray to Allah that He may spare him the torture he could hardly tolerate. The Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: "Among the nations before you a believer was thrown tied into a ditch, and a saw was put over his head and he would be cleaved into two pieces; yet, he would not give up his religion. Before throwing him into the ditch, they would cut roads into his body with hot iron combs that removed his burnt skin; yet, that would not make him abandon his religion. By Allah, this religion (i.e. Islam) will prevail, but you (people) are hasty." [Sahih Al-Bukhari]

Q: Indeed, these are good examples, dad. But they all belong to the generation of the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam). What about our generation?

A: When a person looks at these examples, it does not mean that he is expected to be like them. What it means, though, is that one should try to hold fast to his religion

And do not ever forget that the Prophet (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) has promised those people who maintain their Faith, despite the temptations around them, a liberal reward in the Hereafter. The examples

of such good Muslims all over world today are too many to count. They are people who have managed to achieve success in many different fields of knowledge. They are well versed in religious as well as worldly matters. This is an indication that when youth depend on Allah they can overcome any obstacles that may encounter them

Dad, this has been an excellent discussion; and I feel I have taken much of your precious time. Now, I ask your permission to leave so you can have a bit of rest. May Allah reward you for all you have been doing for me